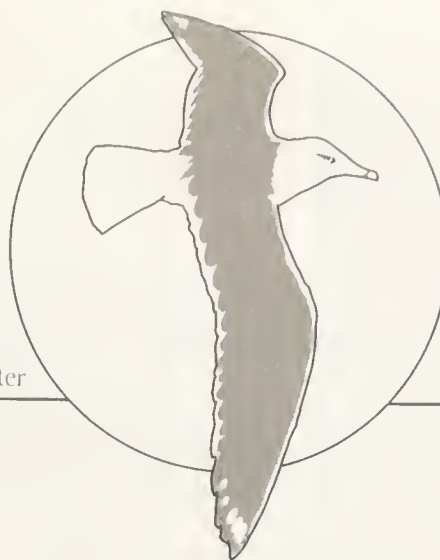


The Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 86 No. 1 January 2002



Are We Working to Save Our Environment? You Bet! —By Arthur Feinstein

JAN 16 2002

We're often so busy we forget to tell you, our members, what we are doing in the world of natural resource conservation. It is something that keeps us constantly engaged.

For example, while electricity-generating wind turbines sound like the ideal clean energy source, the truth is that when they are put in the wrong place they can be incredible engines of destruction for birds. For a clean energy source it can be very, very bloody. For example, the wind turbines at the Altamont Pass kill 40 to 50 Golden Eagles every year and possibly up to 500 Red-tailed hawks, not to mention countless other raptors and smaller birds.

Recently there was a proposal to test the feasibility of putting wind turbines at the end of the old Berkeley Pier, far out in the Bay. Imagine the destructive nature of that proposal. Endangered Brown Pelicans and California Least Terns would be easy victims. The tens of thousands of shorebirds and diving ducks that can be found in this area would all be at risk. Happily, we learned of this project at an early stage and were able to alert the Berkeley City Council of the potential threat to wildlife of such a proposal. We extend our greatest appreciation to Mayor Shirley Dean and the Berkeley City Council for putting this project on hold, at least for now. Investigating this issue, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concluded that the best way to make wind-power a truly clean power is to site it where there are not a lot of birds. The Bay is clearly not the place for wind turbines.

We are working on the planning process for the East Shore State Park (a new state park extending

from the Emeryville Crescent to Marina Way in Richmond). We are urging that the Park include lots of habitat for our rapidly dwindling wildlife species. We hope the Berkeley Meadows will become a wonderful habitat of mixed wetlands and uplands that will provide a home for egrets and herons, for small brown birds such as sparrows and warblers and for raptors such as the White-tailed Kite, the Northern Harrier and even the Burrowing Owl. Nature trails will allow adults and children to experience nature close to home. The world becomes a better place for all.

The Park plans should ensure that the Emeryville Crescent and the Albany Mudflats are preserved as natural areas and that parts of the Albany bulb are restored to valuable wildlife habitat. There are many other improvements that can be made and we are working constantly to make sure that the preservation and restoration of wildlife habitat is an integral part of the planning and implementation process.

We have been heavily engaged in the effort to acquire Red Rock and make it a bird sanctuary. Red Rock is the large island just south of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge at the east end of the Bridge. It is the only privately owned island remaining in the Bay. The Department of Fish and Game, the East Bay Regional Park District and the National Audubon Society have agreed to go in as partners on this project. If the Department can acquire the site, the EBRPD will manage it and National Audubon will lead an effort to attract waterbirds such as the Double-crested cormorant to nest on the island. We have gone to many

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Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, January 5, AQUATIC PARK, San Francisco.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the foot of the Hyde Street Pier (Hyde & Jefferson) for this beginners bird walk. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser will lead this approximately two-hour walk. Dress in layers. This trip is wheelchair accessible. (415) 561-7100 or 561-7104

Saturday, January 5, CRANES AND WATERFOWL OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY.

Meet at 8 a.m. at Westgate Landing County Park. Take 80 to 4, go east to 160. Follow 160 NE to 12, go east on 12 through Terminous and turn left on Glasscock Road (Terminous Market). Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001 RlewisO727@aol.com. (\$)

Sunday, January 6, ARROWHEAD MARSH.

Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline. See November Gull for details. Meet at 9:30 a.m. for this 3-hour trip. Take Hwy 880 to Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west about a half mile, just past Leet Drive, turn right into small parking lot. Leader: Jeffrey Black, 510-526-7068. *

Sunday, January 6, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way). See February trip for details. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

Sunday, January 6, LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS, Marin County.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the head-

quarters to the parking lot on the left. Leader: Mark Eaton (415) 566-6767 mweaton@pacbell.net

Wednesday January 9, MINI-TRIP TO ARROWHEAD MARSH.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy 880 to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. go west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right onto Swan Way. After 1 block, turn left into the MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline and continue to the last parking lot. Beginners welcome. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday, January 12, PALO ALTO BAYLANDS.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. Take Hwy.101 south to Palo Alto; exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the airport and the Baylands Nature Center. Continue beyond the airport to the duck pond (on the left) and park at the east end. If the gate across the road is closed, park in the lot to the immediate right and we will begin the trip there. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074, murphsf@worldnet.att.net (*)

Sunday, January 20, LAKE MERRITT, Oakland.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Grand Ave. and El Embarcadero by the Greek Colonnade. This is an excellent opportunity to observe wintering ducks and grebes at close range. This trip is especially recommended for beginners and is wheelchair accessible. Bring binoculars, scope and field guide if you have them. Trip ends at noon. Rain cancels. Leader: Joan Zawaski (415) 621-2424 days; (510) 530-2427 eve. (*)

Sunday, January 20, SAN LEANDRO MARINA TO HAYWARD SHORELINE.

A non-strenuous 14 mile round trip bicycle birding excursion along a

good bicycle path adjacent to San Francisco Bay. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at San Leandro Marina Park. From 880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. exit west 1.4 mi. and turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. This road ends in 1 mile at the park. AC Transit bus #55 has its terminus here; these buses have bicycle racks. We will see birds on the bay, in the marsh, in the fields and aloft: Grebes, ducks sparrows, shorebirds, herons and raptors. Bicycle helmet required, dress warmly, and bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels to following Sunday, January 27. Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510-547-1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Sunday, January 27, WOODBRIDGE ROAD ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE AND AREA, San Joaquin County.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the park and ride lot on the east side of the intersection of I-5 and Hwy. 12, west of Lodi. The first planned stop will be the Lodi Sewer Ponds. This location is very birdy, and depending upon water levels, in some years, Pacific Golden Plover can be found. We will then caravan to the Woodbridge Road Ecological Area, where we should see Sandhill Cranes and Tundra Swans. The rest of the day will be determined by the leader on the day of the trip. Bring lunch. Trip will end by mid afternoon or sooner depending upon weather. Beginners welcome. Be prepared for cold. Heavy rain cancels. Fog may make viewing difficult. Leader: Jim Rowoth (209) 952-2648 TLALOC27@aol.com.

Saturday, February 2, AQUATIC PARK, San Francisco.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the foot of the Hyde Street Pier (Hyde & Jefferson) for this beginners bird walk. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser will lead this approximately two hour

walk. Dress in layers. This trip is wheelchair accessible. (415) 561-7100 or 561-7104

**Saturday, February 2,
GRIZZLY ISLAND AND
BEYOND, Solano County.**

We will meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot near the McDonald's Restaurant at Sunset and Hwy 12, north of the turnoff to Grizzly Island Road. There we will consolidate cars. Our plans are to bird Hill Slough, Rush Ranch, Grizzly Island and Hwy 113 corridor. Since there are muddy roads, your leader cannot promise exactly where we will bird. Please bring binoculars, scopes, layered clothing, a lunch and sweets to share (if you want to see some interesting views of wild life in the afternoon). If we are lucky, we will see most of the marsh birds, waterfowl and raptors. There may be a chance to see Tule Elk, River Otters, hear Black Rails, see Suisun Song Sparrow, Rough-Legged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk and 3 species of owls. Trip will end by mid-afternoon. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Robin Leong (707) 643-1287

**Sunday, February 3,
PANOCHÉ VALLEY.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Interstate 5 and Little Panoche Rd (this is south of Los Banos). The trip will end in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. This trip traverses raptor habitat which usually produces Golden Eagle, Merlin, and Prairie Falcon, plus Mountain Bluebirds, Phainopeplas and Vesper Sparrows. Considering the distance involved in this trip, be sure to arrive with a full gas tank and carpool from the Bay Area if possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Trip will end about 3 p.m. Rain cancels. Leader: Chris Carpenter (510) 569-9281 day, (510) 547-2201 eve.

**Sunday, February 3,
STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

**Wednesday, February 13,
MINI-TRIP TO COYOTE HILLS
REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot by the Visitors' Center at the end of the road. From the East Bay take 1-880 south to Newark and turn right at Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Continue west and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north one mile and turn left on Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow the signs to Coyote Hills. We will be looking for three species of teal and other wintering waterfowl. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 & Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*).

Problems, etc.: If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, or IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAD A TRIP, call Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair, (510) 654-5954.

Donations

**Golden Eagle
(\$1,000 or more)**

Mrs. Afton E. Crooks (for the Gateway Project)
Amelia and Peter Wilson
H. Allan Ridley

**Peregrine Falcon
(\$500 or more)**

Anonymous (for Martin Luther King Jr. Wetlands Education Project)
Cecily and David Majerus
Jacqueline Smalley and John Austin

**Least Tern
(\$200 or more)**

Ann Dewart
Laura Baker

**Clapper Rail
(\$100 or more)**

Mary Lu and Dr. Robert Schreiber
Thomas C. Merigan
D. K. and L. M. Shunick

**Gifts
(to \$99)**

Working Assets
Nancy Hair
Nancy Bartell
Peter Blume
Ruth Doty

In Memorium

Jane and Michael Larkin in memory of **Paul Green**
Ron and Melanie LoVetri in memory of Mrs. **Joseph Lanum**

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping to preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS Office for more information. Our phone number is 510-843-2222. Thanks.

GGAS Urges Our Alameda and Contra Costa Members to Vote for the East Bay Regional Park District Parcel Tax Measure in the March Election

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) operates 59 regional parks and more than 1,000 miles of trails on 95,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. These parks and trails provide a safe, welcome respite from urban life for people and important habitat for wildlife.

Since the Park District has grown by 31% in acreage over the last ten years, adding over 27,000 acres, it needs more money to manage these lands. In order to generate these needed dollars, the Park District will put on the March 2002

ballot a parcel tax increase that will raise approximately \$7.7 million annually for environmental maintenance and operation of East Bay Regional Parks.

The cost of the proposed tax would be **ONLY \$1 PER MONTH PER SINGLE-FAMILY HOME! ONLY 69 CENTS A MONTH FOR APARTMENTS!** After 12 years, the measure would expire. At \$12 a year, this parcel tax is an incredible bargain for East Bay residents.

Golden Gate Audubon has asked the EBRPD to ensure that a full 30% of all money raised will go

to natural resource management. The EBRPD has agreed to this request and has even exceeded it.

The EBRPD lands sustain many endangered species and hundreds of bird species. This is an extremely important ballot measure. If you care about wildlife in the East Bay please vote for this parcel tax. If you care about our community's mental and spiritual health please vote for it.

Vote Yes on the EBRPD parcel tax.

Spring Birding Classes in San Francisco

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon Society will be starting February 5, 6, and 7, 2002. All classes meet 7-9:15 p.m. in room 221, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *"Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area"* and *"Birds of Northern California."* He is also coordinator of the recorded "Northern California Birdbox" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is *"A Field Guide to Birds of*

North America," third edition, by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution and behavior. Part A (**EA101**) starts February 5 and ends March 19; Part B (**EA105**) starts April 2 and ends May 23.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American birds, including alcids, pigeons, cuckoos, and owls. Part A (**EA110**) starts February 6 and ends March 20; Part B (**EA115**) starts April 3 and ends

May 24.

Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of North American water birds including tubenosed birds, pelicans, and cormorants. Part A (**EA120**) starts February 7 and ends March 21; Part B (**EA125**) starts April 4 and ends May 25.

The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them. Fees are \$115 for each seven-week course. Pre-registration is strongly advised. For further information call (415) 561-1860.



Bad Weather Birding

As the first wet winter storm arrived with a vengeance, we were forced to cut down the Chinese elm which shaded our front door and roof. It was necessary before it literally came through the roof. Be careful what you wish for! We have complained for six years about its messiness and now we miss it, and so do the birds. While we search for a replacement tree, the feeder hangs from a hook and the birds have adapted quickly.

At times I am a fair weather birder. But I admit that I enjoy winter birding almost as much as those gorgeous sunny days. The pesky leaves, which shield the elusive birds I want to identify, have dropped and left clear viewing. The usual birds which winter in my yard and neighborhood have returned. And the wondrous shorebirds and ducks in our wetlands are back to challenge our memories.

"Birder's World" featured an article by Pete Dunne on taking advantage of windy days. Most birds and bird watchers detest windy conditions above all other weather. On blustery days birds restrict their movements while they hunker down in a protected spot out of sight. And to make things more difficult, any bird sounds get carried away and lost in the wind. Even birds near by go unheard and

unseen. However, if you figure out how wind affects different species, you can find them.

If you are searching for woodland species, go to the off-wind side of a forest, hedge or hill. Birds may even be drawn to the same sheltered area that you would seek. The insects some of them enjoy munching will also be there. Instead of being evenly distributed in the area, birds will be concentrated in a still area.

If you are scanning a lake or marsh, nothing will be on a choppy water surface.

But if you walk or drive to a sheltered cove you will find ducks and grebes, waiting in the protected spot for the wind to die down.

Try birding at Hawk Hill in Marin County on a windy day. Birds of prey use the winds associated with cold fronts to migrate in the fall. They can ride the updrafts without expending any energy. Then go down to the lagoon on the ocean side. Here you might see some of the many seabirds brought closer to shore with windy conditions. Gulls, in particular, seek refuge inland in advance of a storm.

Some of my most memorable birding experiences have been just before or after a winter storm. At the Hayward Shoreline our winter birding group scanned the black clouds

forming as a storm approached. We reveled at the sight of hundreds of snow geese wheeling in the dark sky. In the distance were several other large flocks of shorebirds swirling in changing patterns. They were mere black, unidentifiable specks individually but they were so numerous that we could imagine what this bay might have been like in the days when very few humans populated the area.

Bad weather birding requires that you are properly dressed and warm. In windy conditions, merely keeping your binoculars steady is a challenge. Vibrations ruin clear images of the birds. If you are using a scope, a heavier tripod will serve you better. You can make a light one heavier by hanging a sand bag or other weight from the center post. The lower the tripod, the steadier it will be. Try sitting while using a shortened tripod. Or get in the shelter of your car or a hedge. If you can't sit, set your unextended tripod on the hood of your car (protect the paint job with a towel). Usually a lower-power lens rather than one with high magnification will offer clearer views.

Cast caution to the wind, so to speak, and get out there and bird in the winter.

Letters and Emails to the Editor

Jeffery Black sent an email reminding us of the East Bay Birders Web site (<http://folkbird.net/ebb/>), which among other features provides a listserv called "bay area birdwatch". This enables any subscriber to receive emails daily about rare bird sightings in the East Bay. GULL readers might like to check out this valuable site. If you have any item you would like to share with GULL readers, send an email to the Editor, peter_caldwell@attglobal.net. Also, I am looking for an interested person to write a monthly birding Web site review for the GULL.

The Secret Marsh

Many people I talk to don't know about the wonderful M.L.King, Jr. Park located off Doolittle Drive near Hegenberger Road close to the Oakland Airport. Fewer are aware that if you drive in to the park you will come to the original Arrowhead Marsh and the newly restored 71 acres of wetlands next to it. This newly restored marsh with the surrounding cyclone fence is the result of a lawsuit GGAS and others won against the Port of Oakland 10 or more years ago. The purpose of the suit was to restore a marsh and provide breeding habitat for the clapper rail and other endangered species. If you drive in some day you might encounter groups of birders usually with a scope slowly circumnavigating the fenced area and making marks on their clipboards. There might be another group with the same behav-

ior canvassing the original marsh. The purpose of this behavior is to document bird use of the new and the old area to see how successful restoration has been and also to document if there has been any breeding by the clapper rail in the restored area. Thus far there have been sightings but no actual observation of breeding. We have documented breeding of stilts, avocets and other shore birds.

We recently celebrated the third year of a five-year study with a picnic at the marsh for our wonderful volunteers many of whom have been with the program since the beginning. Not all were able to attend the party but we would like to acknowledge everyone's effort in this endeavor. The study is being done by the East Bay Regional Park District, who have oversight of the park. Here is a list of our census takers: Bob Battagin,

Betty Berenson, Kathryn Blake, Kay Bloom, Andree Breaux, Howard Brownson, Virginia Choiniere, Timothy Cleere, Joan Collignon, Kristen Doner, Judith Dunham, Sue Gallagher, Barbara Haley, Susan Hampton, Anne Hoff, Cathy Hubbard, Richard Kaufmann, Evelyn Kennedy, Caroline Kim, Scott Lambert, Jill Lawrence, Melanie Lutz, Mona & Horacio Mena, Collin Murphy, Marilyn Nasatir, Charlotte Nolan, Carol Oda, Kristin Ohlson, Nancy Page, Courtenay Peddle, Lori Poulson, Mike Richter, Phila Rogers, Ruth Sayre, Mary Schaefer, Elizabeth Sojourner, Inge Svoboda, Carol Thorp, Ed Walker, Joanne Wallin, Herta Weinstein, Marian Whitehead, and Rhea Williamson.

Call me if you would like to join us or have questions about the study. Carolyn Kolka 510 549-0411
GGAS Census Coordinator

Alice Hoch's Winter Birding Field Classes

Alice Hoch's next Birding Field Trips class begins Tuesday, Jan. 8th and continues through February 12th. Register by Thursday Jan. 3rd by calling the Fremont Adult School at 510-791-5841.

For the first time, another set of classes will begin on Friday mornings and will be similar to the Tues. morning classes. This set will begin on Jan. 11th and will continue through Feb. 15th. Register for the Friday classes by Tues., Jan. 8th at 510-791-5841.

Class size is limited to 15, so call early. The Friday classes have been added because so many students have been turned away from previous classes which were filled early. The classes will bird a different site one morning each week for 6 weeks from 9:30AM to 12:30PM. (Tuesday and Friday classes may bird the same site, depending on tides, etc.)

Alice has been teaching Birding Field Trips for over 26 yrs. and is an active member of Ohlone Audubon Society. Her classes are filled with

friendly, helpful people at all levels from absolute beginner to very experienced.

Be prepared to birdwatch at the first class meeting.

If you have questions call the Fremont Adult School at 510-791-5841 or call Alice at 510-657-0475.

If you have problems getting into any of these classes, call Alice and, maybe, we can find a better time for an additional class.

News from Audubon Canyon Ranch —Betsy Stafford

It's almost winter, and our California spring is about to begin. Acorns and buckeyes are germinating everywhere, the green fuzz of grass is coating our hills, and newts are climbing out of streams to walk the trails in their hunt for food. Action central everywhere.

We hope you can join us for a look at some of the wonders that our "winter/spring" rains bring to our beautiful Bouverie Preserve. Sign up for one of our Guided Nature Walks at Bouverie, or join us for a working Resource Management Day. Call the Bouverie office at (707)938-4554 for information.

Our volunteer corps at our two teaching preserves – Bouverie and Bolinas Lagoon Preserves – has swelled to almost 400 Docents and Ranch Guides, who teach over 4000 schoolchildren each year and greet nearly 8000 visitors during Bolinas's public season. We heartily welcome your interest in our wonderful volunteer programs, which are taught by our four ACR biologists and other well-known experts in local natural history.

Please consider joining our merry band of Ranch Guides for training

classes on Saturdays, February 2 to March 9 (call 415/868-9244). Or if you can help with a winter bird count and are an experienced shorebird or waterbird observer, please call our Cypress Grove Research Center 415/663-8203 (These are the folks who have been capturing, tagging, tracking, and trying to understand the world of the wily ravens of west Marin.)

Bulldozing for Restoration

The flood plains of our Bolinas Lagoon Preserve are the cherished lands for our buildings, picnic areas, teaching ponds, and groves of redwoods and Douglas Firs that house the heronry. Since 1865 when the first Euroamericans settled in our canyons, people have tried to protect these canyons by taming the creeks that drain into Bolinas Lagoon. In 1982 when 13 inches of rain in 24 hours triggered huge debris flows throughout all four ACR canyons, bulldozers were called in to create berms to halt the flooding. Since then overbank flooding has, indeed, stopped, but so have its beneficial results, like nutrient deposition that enriches soil and keeps sediment out of the lagoon.

Twenty years later ACR has, in our biologist Greg DeNevers' words, "revisited the question of how to live with such dynamic friends as creeks." In the hope that a lively riparian ecosystem can be restored, bulldozers arrived last November to recreate a creek channel by removing all the berms downstream of our Hubbard Center in Volunteer Canyon. The creek now has room to flood at will and meander downstream of our buildings, into the alder-marsh area. An exciting, counter-intuitive idea, as Greg suggests – promoting flooding of our beautiful Volunteer Canyon. Stay tuned for the results!

Would You Like to Spend More Time Outdoors?

Audubon Canyon Ranch invites you to become a weekend volunteer Ranch Guide. Learn about the bird, plants, and freshwater pond critters at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve and share your enthusiasm for and knowledge of the preserve with weekend visitors. Training classes are on Saturdays, February 2 to March 9 (call 415/868-9244).

A Thank You to Our Field Trip Leaders

The following talented and dedicated folks were responsible for stimulating aviphilic behavior all over northern California this past year:

Jeffery Black, Allan Ridley, Helen McKenna, Dan Murphy, Joan Murphy, Alan Hopkins, Harry Fuller, Joan Zawaski, Jim Rowoth, Chris

Carpenter, Anthony Fisher, Courtenay Peddle, Rusty Scalf, Robin Leong, Mark Eaton, Nancy Conzett, Dave Quady, Bob Lewis, Leon Abrams, Cathy Purchis, Herb Brandt, Doug Allshouse, George Bing, Lewis Cooper, Peter Allen, Malcolm Sproul, Carol Kiser, Ken Burton, Jim Tietz, David George, George Peyton, David

Rice, Robin Pulich, Lillian Fujii, Steve Hayashi, Steve and Renee Margolin.

It has been a real pleasure working with you all.

Anthony Fisher



October 31–November 27, 2001

It is hard to believe it is over four years since I began writing this column and I am most grateful to have had the experience. I have learned a great deal about birds, local birders, and choice birding locations. At this writing, a capable replacement, Jay Withgott of San Francisco, is waiting in the wings, so there should be no lapse in coverage of our rich Northern CA bird habitat. Ironically, just today I find that my little inkjet printer seems to have failed me at last, after seeing me faithfully through many reams of printouts of all those reports! I especially want to mention my predecessor, Hugh Cotter, for his reading of the column draft each month (thanks for correcting those errors, Hugh!), as well as the editorial staff of *The Gull* for their excellent work. Most credit, of course, goes to the numerous observers (99 this month!) Now on to the Swan Song!

Loons to Ducks.

Observers delighted in reporting large numbers of Pacific Loons from coastal vantage points, with 3000 flying along the coast near Santa Cruz, SCZ, Nov. 8 (LH), 9000 during a sea watch from Bolsa Pt., SM, Nov. 9 and a whopping 24,000 during a 2 hr. 15 minute interval from the same place on Nov. 18 (RSTh). Pigeon Pt. on the San Mateo coast also had 56 Pink-footed Shearwaters as well as a Short-tailed Shearwater Nov. 11 (JD) and 5 more Pink-footed Shearwaters on Nov. 18 (RSTh). A **Manx Shearwater** (*Puffinus puffinus*) was spotted on Monterey Bay, MTY, Nov. 25 (RT). Two or 3 reports of this species came from SM county last month. A Pt. Pinos, MTY, sea watch produced an Ashy Storm-Petrel Nov. 24 (DR, RiC).

There were 4 reports of Greater White-fronted Geese: one at Shadow Cliffs RP, ALA, Nov. 4 (AS), 2 near the

Russian R. mouth, SON, Nov. 16 (AW), 1 at Arcata, HUM, Nov. 16 (KR), and the continuing bird at L. Merced, SF, Nov. 24 (AGi, PS). Arcata, HUM, hosted 1–2 Snow Geese Nov. 11–20 (JT, KR, FA, MOB), and several coastal reports of Ross's Geese were received: one near the Russian R. mouth, SON, Nov. 16 (AW), 4 at Capitola Beach, SCZ, Nov. 24 (DSu), 2 at Moss Landing, MTY, Nov. 24 (BG), 1 at Laguna Creek Beach, SCZ, Nov. 23 (AG), and 5 near Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, Nov. 25 (RiF). An unusual location for a Brant was the Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline, CC, Nov. 25 (DA).

Wood Duck reports included 6 near Loleta, HUM, Nov. 18 (SM), 1 on Odello Lagoon, MTY, Nov. 20 (DW), 4 at L. Merced, SF, Nov. 23 (Brian Fitch), and 1 at Freedom Lake, SCZ, Nov. 23 (RW). Single Eurasian Wigeons were found: a continuing bird at Calero Reservoir, SCL, Nov. 4–10 (DG, AV), at Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove, MTY, Nov. 7–10 (BMa, RFo, RJA), a continuing bird at Odello Lagoon, MTY, Nov. 5–10 (RFo, BMa), at Zmudowski SB, MTY, Nov. 8–10 (BG, ASi), at Crab Cove, ALA, Nov. 8 (BSt), and at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Nov. 11 (DE), at Arcata, HUM, Nov. 17 (MMo), and in Foster City, SM, Nov. 26 (AD). Several Eurasian Wigeons were also seen at Sacramento NWF, COL, Nov. 16 (ME), and 3 more at Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds, SCL, Nov. 26 (MM).

A Tufted Duck was discovered at the confluence of Matadero and Adobe Creeks, SCL, Nov. 11 (MM). A male Harlequin Duck was at Marina Bay, CC, Nov. 1, where a pair has been seen during several previous winters (SG). Glass Beach, MEN, gets the Harlequin Duck award with 13 noted there Nov. 1 (DT). Individual Harlequin Ducks were found at Elephant Seal Overlook, PRNS, MRN, Nov. 11 (DE), King Salmon, HUM, Nov. 17 (EE), off Bolsa Pt., SM, Nov. 18 (RSTh), the PRNS, MRN, Fish Docks,

Nov. 10 (WL), the Coyote Point Marina, SM, Nov. 26th (RSTh), and two more off Pigeon Pt., SM, Nov. 11 (JD). Two White-winged Scoters were found at an unusual inland location near Benton Hot Springs, MON, Nov. 19 (TM, RH). A Long-tailed Duck was at Jetty Rd., Moss Landing, MTY, Nov. 10 (JM), 3 were reported off Bolsa Pt., SM, Nov. 18 (RSTh), one was at Delevan NWR, COL, Nov. 11 (DD), and still another was at Pescadero Marsh, SM, Nov. 27 (SJ). More than 60 Hooded Mergansers were seen during the period over ALA, CC, HUM, MRN, SF, SCZ, SCL, and SON counties, with high counts of 12 at Oka Ponds, SCL, Oct. 30–Nov. 25 (LS, AWa, ME, MOB), and 20 near Sycamore Grove Park, ALA, Nov. 18 (A).

Raptors to Alcids.

A Bald Eagle was sighted over San Pablo Reservoir, CC, during the last week of October (RP), and a Northern Goshawk was at Big Basin SP, SCZ, Nov. 26 (MB). Single Rough-legged Hawks were at Arcata, HUM, ~Nov. 2–15 (FA, EE, KR), at Coyote Hills for a second year, ALA, Nov. 12–17 (KS, BS, MD), and near Loleta, HUM, Nov. 17 (SM). A Golden Eagle was spotted over Twin Peaks, SF, Nov. 9 (BF).

The **Demoiselle Crane** (*Anthropoides virgo*) first reported Oct. 5 was still at Staten Island Rd., SJ, Nov. 25 (ME, EG, BDo, MOB). As mentioned last month, this Crane winters in India and Sudan and is known as a vagrant in Western Europe, but whether this individual is an escaped bird is unclear. In any case, many birders enjoyed its visit! A few Pacific Golden-Plovers were reported: 1 near Hwy. 1, SM, Nov. 3 (AE), another at Arcata, HUM, Nov. 2–6 (JuP, MZ), 2 at Schollenberger Park, SON, Nov. 23 (SB), and 4 in the Bolsa Point, SM, agricultural field Nov. 25 (RSTh). Flocks of Mountain Plover were found in their usual Central Valley

Wood Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Nov. 11-25 L. Merced, SF RE, CL, BE, MOB

Nashville Warbler

Nov. 4 Buena Vista Park, SF BF
Nov. 14 Casserley Creek, SCZ LG, BM, JP
Nov. 18-21 Big Sur Headlands, MTY Rfo
Nov. 18 Ferndale, HUM SM
Nov. 24 Santa Cruz, SCZ DSu

Lucy's Warbler

Nov. 11-12 Natural Bridges SP, SCZ AK, LG

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Nov. 27 Pajaro R., SCZ RiF

Cape May Warbler

Oct. 28 Oakland Museum, ALA RB

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Nov. 12-15 Soquel Creek, SCZ DSu

Palm Warbler

Nov. 3 Vincent Park, Richmond, CC CL
Nov. 3 Hawk Hill, MRN JD
Nov. 4-7 Redwood Shores Sewage Plant, SM

Nov. 4 Salsopuedes School, SCZ DSu
~Nov. 7 Arcata, HUM EE
Nov. 8 Laguna Grande Park, Seaside, MTY Rfo
Nov. 9 Pajaro R., SCZ DSu
Nov. 9-10 Moss Landing, MTY FT, JM
Nov. 9 Arcata, HUM JT
Nov. 10 Arcata, (different site), HUM JT
Nov. 16 Laguna Creek, SCZ DSu
Nov. 16-17 Moss Landing, MTY RiF
Nov. 24 Ano Nuevo State Reserve, SM PJM
Nov. 26 Mariner's Pt., SM AD

Black-and-white Warbler

Nov. 4-23 Mountain Lake, SF GII, BE, RC
Nov. 4-9 Casserley Creek, SCZ DSu
Nov. 4-13 Manila, HUM JN, DA
Nov. 25 Gazos Creek Rd., SM RSTh

American Redstart

Nov. 10-22 Reichmuth Park, SAC ME, DS

Abbreviations for Observers: RJA, RJ Adams; A, Akira; BA, Bernado Alps; DA, David Anderson; FA, Frank Anderson; DA, David Armstrong; DiA, Dick Ashford; SB, S. Blauman; MB, Matt Brady; RB, Roger Brown; RC, Roy Carlson; RiC, Rita Carratello; DD, Dave Danhke; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; AD, Al DeMartini; BD,

Bruce Deuel, MD, Matthew Dodder, BDo, Bob Dolson; MI, Mark Eaton, LE, Leo Edson, DE, Dean Edwards; AE, Al Eisner; JE, Elias Elias, EL, Ted Elliott, LE, Larry English; ME, Mike Ezekiel, ME, Mike Feighner, RE, Rich Ferrick; BE, Brian Fitch, DE, David Fix, RiF, Rick Fournier; Rfo, Rob Fowler, DG, Don Ganton; AG, Alexander Gauguier; HG, Huber Gemot, BG, Bruce Gerow; AGi, Andy Gibb, SG, Steve Glover, LG, Lois Goldfrank; LG, Ed Greaves, RG, Rudy Gutierrez; SH, Sarah Hamilton; LH, Laird Henkel, RH, Rob Hewitt; DH, David Hoffman; GH, Grant Hoyt; SHu, Sherry Hudson; DHu, Diane Hustad; KI, Ken Irwin, SJ, Sue James; AK, Anna Kopitov, PLT, Peter, laFourrette; WL, William Lake; RL, Rick Lebadour; CL, Cindy Lieurance; CL, Calvin Lou; MM, Mike Mammoser; MOB, Many Observers; BMa, Blake Matheson; SM, Sean McCallister; TM, Tristan McKee; BM, Barry McLaughlin, PJM, Peter J Metropulos; JM, John Meyer; MMo, Mark Morrisette; DM, Dan Murphy; N, Natasha; JN, Jerry Nusbaum; JP, Jeff Poklen; JuP, Jude Power; RP, Ranger Pat; DR, Don Roberson; MR, Mike Rogers; KR, Kerry Ross; PS, Paul Saraceni; BS, Bill Scoggins; DS, Doug Shaw; AS, Akira So; RS, Rich Stallcup; Ast, Andy Stone; DSt, Dick Stovel; BSt, Bonnie Strand; DSu, David Suddjian; LS, Linda Sullivan; KS, Ken Sutton; RT, Richard Termullo, RSTh, Ron S. Thorn; H, Jim Tietz; BT, Bob Tintle; DI, Dorothy Tobkin; FT, Francis Toldi; MU, Myra Ulvang; AV, Ann Verdi; AWA, Alan Walther; DW, Dave Werner; AW, Alan Wight; RW, Roger Wolfe; MZ, Marcus Zeihm, MZL, Matt Zlatunich.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; ABB, Arcata Bird Box; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Lab; COL, Colusa; CC, Contra Costa; CCFs, Coyote Creek Field Station; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MON, Mono; MTY, Monterey; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; SAC, Sacramento; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; YOL, Yolo.

locations, numbering 95 south of Dixon, SOL, Nov. 18 (LE), 25 east of Zamora, YOL, Nov. 11 (LE), and 100-122 near the intersection of Flannery and Robinson Rds., SOL, Nov. 25-26 (AW, TE, DiA). In great contrast to recent months, but usual for the period, only one Pectoral Sandpiper was reported: along Staten Island Rd., SJ, Nov. 4 (RL). Field's Landing, HUM, hosted a Rock Sandpiper Nov. 3 (JuP), two were at McKerricher SP, MEN, Nov. 1 (DT) and 1-2 were at Fairhaven, HUM, Nov. 14-18 (KR). A Ruff continued at Doran County Park, SON, Nov. 7-14 (DH, ME). Two reports of Glaucous Gulls were received: off Pigeon Pt., SM, Nov. 11 (JD), at Strybing Arboretum, GGP, SF, Nov. 25 (MZL), and apparently the same bird was at Stowe Lake, GGP, SF, Nov. 26 (BF). Up to 22 Black Skimmers continued at Charleston Slough, SCL, Nov.

4-25 (N, DSt, GII, MOB). A **Long-billed Murrelet** (*Brachyramphus perdix*) was found at Patrick's Point SP, HUM, Nov. 13 (KI). This species is a rare visitor from Siberia, and a recent split from the Marbled Murrelet.

Hummingbirds to Finches.

A Costa's Hummingbird was sighted in Stevens Creek Park, SCL, Nov. 24 (LE). Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported: one at Pescadero, SM, Nov. 3-4 (RSTh, CL), and the other at Del Valle RP, ALA, Nov. 6 (MF, AE). There were also two Red-naped Sapsuckers: at East Phillips Rd, SCZ, Nov. 9 (DSu), and at Aptos Creek, SCZ, Nov. 19 (DSu). A hybrid Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker was found for the 2nd winter on the same pepper tree in Ed Levin County Park, SCL, Nov. 26 (PLT). A **Dusky-capped**

Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) was at Bodega Harbor, SON, Nov. 17 (RS). This species is a relative of the Ash-throated Flycatcher and commonly resides in Mexico and SE Arizona. It is a very rare late fall and winter visitor to CA (Small, 1994). A Tropical Kingbird was at the Pajaro R., SCZ, Nov. 11 (RG), and two others remained in SF: at the Buffalo Paddock, GGP, Nov. 19-26 (DM, ME), and at L. Merced Nov. 23-24 (BE, PS). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was discovered just south of Pt. Sur, MTY, Nov. 4 (BA, DHu). Unusual for the location was a female Mountain Bluebird at Merrie Way, SF, Nov. 1 (MU), as was a Townsend's Solitaire near Hillsdale Blvd. and Hwy 92, SM, Oct. 31 (RSTh). Two out-of-area Phainopeplas were spotted, one returning to Pacific

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Observations...

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Grove, MTY, Nov. 14 (fide DR), and another in Del Valle RP, ALA, Nov. 18 (A). A few interesting Wood Warblers were still moving through the area (see Chart) but numbers were much decreased from the last period.

Nice to see in November were several Summer Tanagers: one in Pescadero, SM, Nov. 3 (RSTh), 1-2 in Seaside, MTY, Nov. 15-17 (RFo), and another at Mill Creek Campground, Big Sur, MTY, Nov. 25 (CiL). An American Tree Sparrow was found near Benton Hot Springs, MON, Nov. 19 (TM, RH). Three Clay-colored Sparrows were reported: 1 at Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, Nov. 19 (WL), in

Ferndale, HUM, Nov. 21 (KR), and at Bayside, HUM, Nov. 27 (DF). The period also included 3 Brewer's Sparrows, at Muir Beach Overlook, MRN, Nov. 11 (DE), on the east shore of Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Nov. 11 (DE), and one banded at BSOL, MTY, Nov. 17 (SH). Ten reports of single Swamp Sparrows were received over HUM, MTY, SF, SM, and SCZ counties, and 21 White-throated Sparrows were seen over ALA, HUM, SF, SCL, SCZ counties, with a group of 4 at Eureka, HUM, ~Nov. 17 (JT, ABB), and 3 captured at CCFs, SCL, during the week of Nov. 20 (SHu).

A McCown's Longspur was found near Gonzales, MTY, Nov. 18 (BT). Lapland Longspurs were seen in 3 locations: 1-5 at Arcata, HUM, Nov.

4-13 (BD, JT), one over Arroyo Leon Creek, SM, Nov. 18 (RSTh), and 2 over Bolsa Pt., SM, Nov. 10 (RSTh). A Chestnut-collared Longspur was also seen, at Sierra Rd. Summit, SCL, Nov. 6 (MR). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was near BSOL, MTY, Nov. 18-21 (RFo). Two late Bobolinks appeared: one at Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, Nov. 8-17 (BG, FT), and the other near Hwy. 1, SCZ, Nov. 16 (DSu). A Baltimore Oriole was found in Cole Valley, SF, Oct. 12 (PS). Two Cassin's Finches flew over Hawk Hill, MRN, Nov. 3 (JD), and a Lawrence's Goldfinch was in SCZ county Nov. 22, unusual in the county during late fall (fide DSu).

Front cover...

Continued from page 1

meetings to testify in support of this project and we have high hopes that it will succeed. If it does take place, our advocacy will have played a critical role.

Speaking of Double-crested cormorants, you may not realize it but hundreds of cormorants nest on the eastern span of the Bay Bridge. When the realignment of this span was proposed we were the folk who knew of the cormorants nesting there. We went to CALTRANS and asked that they provide new nesting sites for the cormorants when the new bridge span is created. We are very glad to say that CALTRANS heard our plea and they will provide new roosting sites for the cormorants on the new bridge span.

The Emeryville Crescent is one of the richest shorebird habitats in the Bay. Up to 12,000 shorebirds at a time

may be found there. Unfortunately, at high tides these birds have no place to go in the Crescent, it being surrounded by highways and buildings. Our birders have seen shorebirds standing on the shoulders of other shorebirds during the highest tides. We have long sought to create new high tide roosting habitat for these shorebirds in the Crescent.

One of the impacts of the Bay Bridge realignment is to destroy some shorebird habitat. CALTRANS proposed to mitigate for this loss of Emeryville Crescent mudflats and sandflats by creating wetlands miles away in Richmond or San Pablo Bay. In a tense meeting with CALTRANS we strongly argued for local mitigation in addition to the other worthwhile projects they proposed. They finally understood the necessity of our request and we are overjoyed to

report that CALTRANS will create shorebird roosting habitat in the Emeryville Crescent as partial mitigation for Bridge realignment impacts. They are also going to provide funding for wetland restoration along the East Bay shoreline.

Thank you CALTRANS! We greatly appreciate your response to our request. We're sure that the shorebirds and other waterbirds who will benefit from your actions would also extend their thanks to you if they could.

As you can see, we keep very busy and we are, happily often very successful in our efforts to preserve and enhance the natural areas and wildlife we are blessed with in the Bay Area. With your financial and volunteer help we will keep on doing our good deeds.

A Win For All!

Golden Gate Audubon, Urban Creeks Council, Sierra Club S.F. Bay Chapter, Friends of Five Creeks, Live Oak Codornices Creek Neighborhood Assn., Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative, Eco-City Builders, Berkeley Eco-House, California Oaks Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity, Alameda Creeks Alliance (the Coalition) and Congregation Beth-El have reached an agreement regarding the potential daylighting of Codornices Creek.

The creek, which is one of Berkeley's most free-flowing streams, is also one of the only East Bay Creeks to support a steelhead population. It flows underground at 1301 Oxford Street, the site of Beth El's planned new facilities adjacent to Live Oak Park. The Coalition and Beth El worked hard to develop a plan that would protect the creek, while at the same time allow construction on the site. The agreement reached provides for new development to be set back from the creek bed to allow for future daylighting.

In addition, Beth El has agreed to be the applicant on proposals for fundraising and permits required to daylight the creek on their property. The Urban Creeks Council is already the recipient of grants under Prop 13 and Cal-Fed for creek restoration in the northern corridor. Through the diligence of all of the parties, Codornices Creek's restoration will be a win-win project for everyone concerned.

January Meetings

San Francisco – January 10, 2001

Golden Gate Audubon Society's January San Francisco program will be an update on Mountain Lake. If you can, please join us at the Randall Museum on Thursday, January 10, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Mountain Lake is a gem of a natural area on the San Francisco Peninsula. Recently it has received extra attention from its surrounding community in an effort to celebrate and revitalize its role as a well-loved park and as valuable habitat for plants and animals. Three speakers will present their involvement with Mountain Lake.

Michael Boland is the Project Manager for the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan, which is a collaboration between the National Park Service, Presidio Trust, and the Golden Gate National Parks Association. The Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan seeks to improve water quality, enhance visitor experience and increase biodiversity in and around the lake. He'll bring you up to

date on the goals and successes of the enhancement plan.

Joseph Kinyon is Program Manager for the California Academy of Sciences' Mountain Lake Research Project. The Academy has partnered with many groups and schools, and currently works with approximately 150 students who monitor water quality, zooplankton, birds, reptiles and amphibians. He'll tell you about the observations participants have made that give us insight into life at the lake.

Andrew Rush is currently a student at U.C. Berkeley and has been a key participant in the bird-monitoring component of the Mountain Lake Research Project for two years. He'll present his observations and enthusiasm about avian life at Mountain Lake.

All three look forward to your interest and questions.

East Bay – January 17, 2001

For the January East Bay program Ted Pierce, Bay Area birding instructor

and writer, will do a slide show and lecture on *20,000 Years of Bird Illustration*. If you can, please join us at the Northbrae Community Church on Thursday, January 17, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Birds have been depicted in every conceivable art form (mosaic, sculpture, tapestry, canvas, pottery, cartoon and fresco) from the time of the ancient Anatolians, Egyptians, and Chinese to the present day. *20,000 Years of Bird Illustration* will show the panorama of bird art from many cultures and civilizations around the world, from its beginnings in Paleolithic times to such Renaissance and modern masters as DaVinci, Bosch, Holbein, Blake, Audubon, and Picasso. This program will explore the relationships between the natural history and symbolic/religious meanings of the birds illustrated and trace the development of avian images from ancient mythology to modern science.



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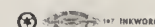
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